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W. A. BROWN FOSH

SIXTY YEARS IN JOURNALISM

By

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The text of the address delivered by Mr. Dafoe on the occasion of a dinner tendered to him by the Winnipeg Press Club to mark the completion of sixty continuous years of newspaper work in Canada. He was introduced to his audience by Mr. E. J. Tarr, K.C.

ROYAL ALEXANDRA HOTEL, WINNIPEG, CANADA

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SIXTY YEARS IN JOURNALISM

THIS old heart and brain is more moved than I thought was possible. I have been wondering whether I could take it. I understood that this was to be a little function of the Winnipeg Press Club, of which I am a charter member, and that there would be a few speeches. I went out into the country to have a much needed holiday when I got the news that—well—that this was to be the result of the activities of my friends of the Press Club. Now, I am not going to say, or to suggest, for a moment that I am not deeply moved and pleased. Nevertheless, it is a surprise, though a very pleasant one, and one the memory of which will never fade from my mind. I suppose it might have been wise to have prepared a script. It is always wise to do so if one has to talk over the radio, but I couldn't sit down in cold blood in my study and try to deal with the emotions which I knew would be evoked by a gathering of this kind. I therefore speak without preparation except that I have the odd note to keep me from indulging in my weakness for wandering in by-paths and never arriving at any definite destination. With this explanation I will proceed.

They say of all old men, and of all old ladies too, for that matter, that they live in the past. For the past four years I have been so busy thinking of the present and looking to the future that I had pretty well forgotten my past; but when I was told that I was to speak on the question of sixty years in journalism why, naturally, the past re-emerged in my mind, and I have been living over those days during the last two or three weeks, perhaps to the exclusion of other matters; and I find them interesting and in some sense moving.

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NOW, you have heard some remarks from my friend to the right; and I think there are some other messages of like tenor, and it would not be very seemly if I were to put on any aspect of mock modesty and repudiate all these kind words, though I might say that they might be moderated a little bit; but on the whole I will admit that, judged by wordly standards, I have been moderately successful in life and have not done too badly in making friends—

after all, this gathering is the evidence that I have not failed in that respect. I also have hopes that when "the long trick's over" there will be a judgment that I have made some contribution to my times and to my country.

In the successes which have come to me I know that fortune played a large part. When I think of the young men that I started life with and recall what happened to some of them, I realize that the race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. I was born under a favorable star. I was born right up on the crest of the highlands of central Ontario, in a backwoods settlement in which I was the second child born, and I shall have to give you, I think, the details of how I entered journalism.

I was going to high school in an Ontario town when the incredible thing happened. In the twinkling of an eye I was transferred from the desk of the high school to become a member of the editorial staff of the *Montreal Star*. There was not one chance in ten thousand that the average hard-boiled editor would do what the editor of the *Montreal Star* did in that connection. His name was E. G. O'Connor. He was a prince of a man, a man of wide sensibilities and ideas; and it occurred to him in February, 1883, to put in the *Weekly Star* (the *Family Herald and Weekly Star* which you country boys—I suppose there are lots of them here—have seen) a statement that there was an opening on the *Star* for a young man of high ambitions. Well, I sat down and wrote forthwith. I got a come-on letter saying that he would give me a trial, and before he knew it I was walking into his office. I climbed on the first train; I arrived late at night in Montreal at the Quebec Gate station; went to an hotel, and early in the morning I walked into the *Star* office.

The *Star* was not then the great paper that it is now. It had very humble quarters. I walked up a high stairway of a building on Craig Street into a room where a lot of young men were working very vigorously, supervised by a city editor who was one of the best in the business that I ever knew; and from there I went into another room where there were four desks, and editors were at work. In a front corner room I found Mr. O'Connor. I told him who I

was, and he looked at me a little surprised; and he puzzled for a while. "Yes," he said, "we will give you a trial." (My biographer, you see, has not got this quite right). He said: "You do not know the city very well; we will give you some inside work." So in place of being a cub reporter I became a cub editor at six dollars a week.

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MR. O'Connor and I became the most intimate of friends in after years, and I asked him once why he had not thrown me into the battle outside. "Well, if you must know," he said, "it was because I thought you were a little too green." Being green, having an air of rusticity, was one of the fortunate things—one of the things that my star dictated. Opportunity is half the battle of life. "Master of human destinies am I," as the well-known poem has it. If you do not get started right and have ten years to make up, sometimes you never get really started; but I had opportunity knocking at my door, and all I can say is this—that I went out and grabbed her immediately and acted forthwith. You all know me for a very shy, retiring and timid man, and when I look back at my youth I wonder where I got the gall I had then and where I lost it.

They put me to work, and soon after they sent me on the job of trapping a clothing store of which you have heard. They were building up a case against this store which was situated on St. Joseph Street, near Bonaventure Station. The modus operandi was that a nice, green-looking fellow going into the city would be picked up and asked if he did not want some clothing. Then the sharks would take him in and sell a good suit and then substitute a very inferior one. The *Star* editors decided that while they had quite a bit of evidence, they wanted to have it absolutely cinched; and it occurred to them that the green lad was the boy to try it out. They equipped me with an old-fashioned green travelling bag; I did not have to put on any old clothes because I had them already. I went down to the station on circus day and wandered down St. Joseph Street carrying the carpet bag, and looking around at the wonders of Montreal; and I was picked up at once. I went in and was taken up on the next floor.

Meanwhile there were detectives outside—they were watching proceedings. I

explained that I was from the country and had some money, and that I was going to have a good time in town, and I thought I would buy a suit of clothes. Soon there were signals going on all over the place, which I noticed. They sold me a very good suit of clothes at a very good price, and they said: "You will get it as you go down the stair." I got it—at least I got a parcel—and when I got out I started headlong for the detective's office.

When I arrived there the editor of the *Star* was there, and the business man who had put the *Star* on to this business. In the parcel there was a suit worth, perhaps, \$2.15. I was very proud at having carried out my orders. I was for hiking back to the office. "Oh, no!" they said, "you have to go back and raise a row by saying that you have been swindled." That was not so hot, but my well-known gall was summoned to the rescue, and back I went with a couple of detectives following me along; I went in and—Well—they were the most astonished people; they had a reputation unsullied; nobody had ever questioned anything they had done; and here was I, an ignorant country bumpkin, coming in and challenging their integrity. I made my protest and marched out and went back to the detective's office and delivered the suit to him. When I was going out of the front door, he said: "Just wait. They may have trailed you. I will see that you get back to the office without anybody seeing you." So he took me down a long corridor, and opened a door to a secret stairway, and I went down the stairs and slipped out into the back lane and went to the office—it was all very thrilling to a kid of seventeen, believe me.

Well, the next week they started to expose the store; on the second day Hugh Graham was sued for libel for \$100,000 or some such amount; and the third day my story appeared in all its glory. It blew up the libel suit; it blew up the store, and it blew the swindlers out of Montreal. The whole swindle disappeared.

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NOW that was not a bad start for a country boy. As I was still not trusted on the streets they gave me inside work to do, and I used to write stirring articles. My specialty was to point out to the people who wrote the books that I reviewed that they did not know anything about their subject. I was particularly

severe on young poets. I wrote a little poetry myself in those days, and it may have been jealousy. In the following January Mr. O'Connor came to me and said: "How would you like to go up and report the parliamentary session?" I can see now that it was one chance in a thousand that a thing like that could happen, but at the time I took it as a matter of course. It was a recognition of my something-or-other, and I sailed up to Ottawa, where I was the parliamentary correspondent for the *Star* for the next two years.

At this time I will have to give a little political information. I usually do not like these confessions, but my biographer has to be set right. It is true that the township from which I came, up in the backwoods, was not a township which in after years would have put up a monument to me for my later political views. I think that with outsiders voting (in those days outsiders could vote), the Grit candidate might get five or six votes in the township. The rest of them were Orange Tory, and they voted for Mackenzie Bowell, who was the Grand Master of the Orange Order, and later Prime Minister of Canada. That was the atmosphere from which I came; although, of course, a youth of seventeen does not have any set politics.

The opening of Parliament came, and one day I climbed the stairway of the old Parliament building, which has since vanished from the face of the earth, burned up during the last war. The two hundred and fifteen members of that Commons have also disappeared, with one notable exception—Sir William Mulock, now in his hundredth year, survives. The debate on the Address from the Throne proceeded. I went up that stairway perhaps not much interested in politics, and I came down a fighting Grit; and the man who converted me was a gentleman by the name of Edward Blake, so I got my doctrine at headquarters. I had heard preachers and revivalists who came around at intervals, but the idea that one could do with the English language what Edward Blake did that night swept me off my feet. Sir John made a reply to Blake—a very neat reply. He did not have to argue—he had sixty of a majority. It was not necessary for him to make an argument. He turned about and talked to his supporters, who wildly cheered him. Up in the press gallery the youngster decided to put his money on the other side.

MY task as a correspondent was to write a column of exposition and comment on the day in Parliament and get it into the late night mail to reach Montreal in the morning. I had a good deal of free time and I spent much of it in an alcove in the Parliamentary Library which was given over to English literature. It was haunted to much the same extent by the youngest member of Parliament—a handsome and attractive young man still in his twenties. He was Charles Tupper the younger. We had much conversation about politics, our careers and so forth. He told me that he had contested Pictou in the general election of 1882 under pressure; that he had no desire to get deeper into politics—would prefer to drop out and stick at law. "But mind you," he would say, "if the Grits say I am afraid to run I'll show them." The Grits did say it; he did run; and he remained in Parliament for three additional Parliaments as a cabinet minister in the rapid ministries which marked the closing years of Conservative domination; and afterwards as a foremost member of the Opposition. He missed the leadership of his party and ultimate premiership by a singular mischance—the recall of his father from London to lead the party in the defeats of 1896 and 1900.

Diagonally across the Parliamentary Library was an alcove given up to French literature. It, too, had a rather steady visitor in the person of a tall member, still on the youngish side of life. He was a kindly, companionable man, and I soon struck up a friendship with him. He was generally regarded as one whose career had not fulfilled its earlier promise. An old member of the Press Gallery dilated to me upon the disappointment that was felt at the collapse of so promising a career. "There," he said, "is a man upon whom we (the speaker was a Grit) counted to win Quebec for the party; he has now petered out just like so-and-so," indicating another comparatively young French-Canadian member sitting in the front row of Opposition members. He was right about the second man who was about to disappear from public life, but somewhat mistaken about the immediate object of his lamentation. The man whose career was thus supposed to be over was Wilfrid Laurier. In the session of 1884 he spoke but seldom, but always with great distinction. He was in indifferent health; and it was known that he was seriously considering retiring

from public life. Subsequent developments, however, illustrated anew the soundness of Harriet Martineau's saying that "Prophecy is the most gratuitous form of error."

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PARLIAMENT rose early that year, and my kind chief gave the boy another highly interesting assignment, sending me to Quebec to cover the Quebec Legislature; and I had six weeks in the ancient capital under conditions which enabled me to explore every nook and corner of that city and its neighborhood. The Liberal opposition was limited to a mere handful of members, but it included one former premier of the province, Henri Joly de Lotbiniere, two future premiers, Mercier and Marchand, and F. X. Lemieux, who was beginning a great career in politics and law, ending on the bench. With all these I established friendly relations, and in many ways I found my experience at Quebec in after life most valuable.

The year 1885 was politically big with fate. At the opening of the session of Parliament, which I again attended, the government of Sir John A. Macdonald seemed as impregnable as ever, but before the year was out, it was faced with a question which had dynamite in it no matter how it was dealt with. This was the Northwest rebellion, and the problem of Louis Riel's fate. In the late winter we began to hear rumors of trouble on the banks of the Saskatchewan. Assured by the Superintendent of Indian Affairs that this was idle and mischievous gossip, I walked directly over to the Press Gallery and got there just in time to hear Sir Hector Langevin announce the outbreak of the rebellion and the slaughter of the police and settlers at Duck Lake by the insurgents. Eventually the rebellion was put down and Riel was captured. He was found guilty of treason at Regina by a jury, with a recommendation to mercy arising from the jury's doubts as to his sanity.

What was to be his fate? Should he be hanged or should his sentence be commuted? The solution of that problem affected the future of political parties in Canada for the next fifty years. There were two roads for the government to follow, and there was trouble along either road. The decision of the government was closely kept secret; and I was rather staggered

when I was assigned to find out whether Riel was going to be hanged or not. I went up to Ottawa and skirmished around officials. I found a hunch everywhere that he was going to be hanged. One prominent civil servant, well on the inside, Henry J. Morgan, said: "I do not know anything about it, but you can bet your last money that Riel is going to be hanged." So, bold as brass, I wired the *Star* that the hanging would proceed "according to plan" as they say nowadays. After that prediction, of course, Riel's fate was sealed.

The execution of Riel had many startling consequences, one of which was that it brought Laurier to life again politically. Addressing a vast meeting on the Champ de Mars in Montreal he made the famous remark that if he had been living on the banks of the Saskatchewan in the spring of 1885 he would himself have shouldered his musket. He then invaded Ontario and addressed a series of meetings. His charm of manner, far surpassing that of any public man I have ever known, his complete fearlessness in facing hostile audiences, and the power of his eloquence, gave him a position in the Liberal party and in public regard that made his selection as leader inevitable when Blake, following the defeat of 1887, threw up his hands.

The next session of Parliament saw, in April, 1886, the debate on the execution of Riel. It took place on a resolution moved by a French Conservative member, Landry, condemning the government for not commuting the sentence. It was notable for three speeches—that by Laurier, who, in the opinion of many, reached the high water mark of his eloquence; by Blake, who joined in the condemnation of the government; and by the new Minister of Justice, John Thompson, who on this occasion first revealed his quality to the House. The question became an open one, and in the resulting division about half the French Conservatives voted against the government and half the Ontario Liberals voted with the government—a remarkable performance bearing in mind the strong party feeling of those days.

There was general agreement on both sides of the House that Blake had met his match in the redoubtable new minister. How the Tories cheered at the attainment of what for years had seemed impossible! Sir John Thompson (as he became) was at heart a fire-eater; but he added enor-

mously to the effectiveness of his arguments by carrying into the Commons the air of judicial reserve and impartiality which he had acquired on the bench. Sir Richard Cartwright never gave such visible signs of satisfaction as on a certain day when his barbs reached their target, and Sir John cast his judicial pose to the winds and answered him in a great outburst of vituperation. As he sat down he said to Sir John Macdonald, in a voice that could be heard in the Press Gallery: "I cut the heart out of that fellow this time." Sir Richard kept on smiling. Sir John Thompson was a great figure in Parliament and in public life, indeed, one of the greatest in our history; but he was not altogether happy in it. A month or so before he made the trip to Great Britain, where he was to die in Windsor Castle from a heart attack, he discussed the satisfactions of public life with a leading Liberal, and said he thought them largely offset by the littlenesses and bitterness of politics.

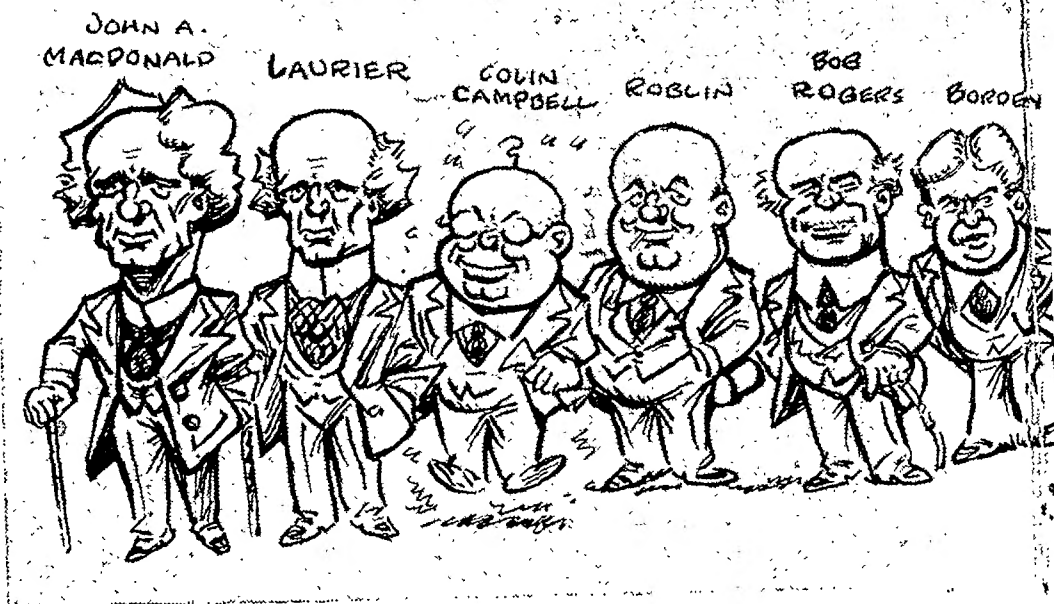
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IN the late months of 1885 the owner of a large printing establishment in Ottawa decided to issue a daily paper. He offered me the editorship and with a recklessness, which I still admire but cannot now understand, I took on the job. I therefore have the credit, which I value, of having been the original editor of what became, in time, and continues to be, one of the best newspapers in Canada: the *Ottawa Journal*. After about five months of it I had sense enough to realize I was beyond my depth, and I was about to throw up the position and seek my fortune in the United States, when Archie McNee, the managing editor of the *Free Press*, who was representing that paper in the gallery, offered me a position. Mr. McNee will be remembered by some of the older people in this audience as a prominent citizen who went into newspaper work late in life. He had an interest in the *Free Press* and later, after he had closed it out, he removed to Windsor, where he founded the *Record*, which was the ancestor of the present *Windsor Star*. I landed in Winnipeg early in May, 1896, and went to work. I thus fell in a moment from an exalted position of editorship to the rank of a mere reporter. Mulvaney had not yet appeared in literature or I could have said with him, "I was a corporal wanst but I was rejucied."

I MIGHT here say a word about the newspapers as they were about the time I went into journalism. They were just beginning to emerge from the phase in which their first business was that of being personal and political organs. Around the date of Confederation and for some time afterwards, no great amount of capital was needed to start a newspaper—a font or so of type, a few printers, and an inexpensive press. The *Star* was a four-page paper of seven columns to the page; eight pages on Saturday. It carried telegraph news on the first page, editorials and letters on the second, a romantic serial of the *May Agnes Fleming* or *Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth* type on the third—this was an indispensable feature—and local news on the fourth.

In the Montreal which I first knew there were, for a period of some years, six daily newspapers in English and at least five in French, though it then had less than half the population of the Winnipeg of to-day. As purveyors of news their services were rudimentary. The telegraph companies of that day carried a news service of sorts and most newspapers were content with this supplemented by an occasional special from Ottawa and the larger cities. When I launched the *Ottawa Journal* I solved the problem of outside news with great ease. I went down to the Great Northwestern Telegraph offices and contracted for a service for which I paid the staggering sum of \$15 a week. But the older and better established newspapers, primarily interested in politics, were ably written. I remember Sir John Willison, after going through some old files of the *Globe*, expressing his surprise at the vigor and quality of the editorial pages.

By the early eighties, however, newspapers were beginning to appear which claimed to be superior to politics, and primarily devoted to news. In communities where every one "born into the world alive was either a little Liberal or else a little Conservative" these papers had to skate warily to avoid giving offence. They used to balance and qualify their articles bearing on politics so skilfully that they came to be known as the "However and Nevertheless" sheets. In time, nevertheless, these newspapers as they grew in power so changed the journalistic atmosphere that newspapers began to disown the title of "party organ" and to proclaim their independence of all dictation in the fields of opinion and news.



This composite photograph and cartoon, executed by Arch Dale, Free Press, shows the men at the dinner at which the address was made.



The Press cartoonist, appeared on the menu and toast list on the occasion of the Press here reproduced was delivered.

One of the survivors of an earlier day, both of journalism and political life, was an occasional visitor to the editorial offices of the *Star* during my first years there. I noticed that every few days an old gentleman, somewhat decrepit, would come into the office and paw over the exchanges. The habit was evidently well established as his visits were taken as a matter of course. One day I heard the editorial writer address him as Sir Francis, whereupon I identified him as Sir Francis Hincks, editor forty years earlier of the *Montreal Pilot*, colleague of Baldwin and Lafontaine in the battle for responsible government, premier of Canada in the early fifties, a consenting party to the merger of Liberals and Conservatives in 1854 to form the Liberal-Conservative party, the Imperial governor of various colonies, finance minister in Sir John A. Macdonald's government shortly after Confederation. He was then living in almost entire retirement in a small house behind a high brick wall. In August, 1885, he died in that house, a victim to the small-pox epidemic of that year.

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THE Winnipeg which I first saw in 1886 had less than 20,000 population; it was still prostrate from the bursting of the great boom. But it had no lack of newspapers; in the morning the *Free Press*; in the evening the *Sun*, the *Manitoban* and the *News*. All were four-page papers. The page of the *Free Press* was the largest size possible and it was known as a blanket sheet. The Legislature was sitting, and as a supposed expert in that kind of reporting by virtue of three years at Ottawa, I went at once into the press gallery. Chief Justice Prendergast, who has honored us by his presence to-night, was a member of that Legislature; that was the beginning of his long and honorable career of public service. An election was in the offing and the result was a "certain liveliness" at times in the Legislature, particularly when Joe Martin, sharpshooter for the Opposition, had the range of the ministerial benches. The election that followed was almost a draw and two years later the Greenway government entered upon its twelve-year term of office.

Manitoba in those days was to all appearances an insignificant province; one would say that nothing that could happen here politically could have repercussions

outside of its boundaries. But in the six years I was here two issues of Dominion-wide importance engaged the attention of people and Legislature. One was the final success of the long fight against the exercise by the Dominion government of its powers of disallowance for the purpose of preserving a railway monopoly in this province. The other was the breaking out of the Manitoba school question. This came out of a clear sky. Joseph Martin, a member of the government, attending an Equal Rights meeting at Portage la Prairie in August, 1889, at which Dalton McCarthy spoke, announced that the Greenway government would abolish the dual language system, and he foreshadowed equally drastic action with respect to separate schools. His colleagues, including the Premier, got this news from the report in the morning *Free Press*. My friend Chief Justice Prendergast, who was a member of that government, resigned at once to lead the Opposition to this legislation. Mr. Martin's speech was like putting a match to dry prairie grass; the conflagration swept the province and leaped far beyond provincial boundaries.

The question became a factor in Dominion politics which powerfully influenced the course of Canadian history. This issue, intertwined with that arising from the Northwest Rebellion, resulted eventually in the overthrow of an administration which had for years been impregnable. For though the Conservatives remained in power as long as they had Sir John Macdonald, his death in 1891 was the beginning of the end.

These two controversies, which I saw develop from beginnings which seemed to be nothing more than a mere item in the day's news into nation-shaking causes, awakened in me a knowledge of the historic importance of events that may at first sight seem insignificant. I commend the thought to my young newspaper friends. You may write the report of an event and it goes into the paper—it is all in the day's work, to be forgotten. But later you may find that what you were dealing with was a turning point in the history of your country. It is a prime qualification of the journalist to be able to sense the course of events and foresee the future from the daily chronicle of affairs.

EARLY in 1892 a turn of the wheel took me back to Montreal. The *Herald*, the historic Liberal morning daily, had fallen on evil days, but at the moment when it seemed to be on the point of disappearing a group of leading Liberals got together and took it over. My friend O'Connor took over the management, and he called me back from Winnipeg to take editorial charge. In this position I was soon in the thick of the Liberal campaign which in 1896 put the Liberals, with Laurier at their head, in office after eighteen years in the wilderness. It was for the Liberals a stimulating and cheering campaign. The stars in their courses fought for us. All the breaks of the game came our way. The distracted Conservatives, following the death of Sir John Macdonald, had four changes of leadership in as many years. The difficulties which had accumulated during many years of office were beyond solution. I was young, still in my twenties, and I put everything I had into the campaign short of public speaking—a vice I had not yet acquired. I travelled the country with the party campaigners from Laurier down; sat in with the party strategists; was busy with propaganda.

Looking back at the result in Quebec, which was the most surprising feature of the election, I can see that it was the combination of Laurier, the orator, and Tarte the tactician, that proved irresistible; neither could have succeeded without the other. I have many lively recollections of that struggle, and particularly of a meeting in Montreal which remains in my memory as the most completely satisfactory event of the kind that I ever experienced. It was to be the opening gun in the campaign in Montreal; and we had grave doubts as to whether we could fill Windsor Hall, the party not having had much luck in the city in previous contests. When the night came, the meeting only failed of being one of the greatest ever addressed by Laurier by the inability of the thousands who were outside to get into the hall. The speakers were Wilfrid Laurier; W. S. Fielding, then Premier of Nova Scotia; William Paterson, M.P., afterwards a member of the Laurier government; and Duncan Fraser, M.P., of Nova Scotia.

As Laurier rose to speak to the crowded audience he threw up his hands and said, "Can this be Tory Montreal?" All the speakers were at the top of their form.

Fraser, the last on the programme, when he rose to speak was threatened with an exodus as the hour was late; but with his opening sentence he got the attention of the whole audience and had a triumphant reception. Mr. Paterson, "Billy" as he was known to his friends, was the uncle of Mr. W. P. Davies of the Grand Forks (North Dakota) *Herald*, who has honored us with his presence to-night, and Alistair Fraser of the Canadian National, who is also with us, is the son of Duncan Fraser. I do not think any of my experiences in later political campaigns ever quite matched the night of June 23, 1896, when we were able to figure out before midnight a definite Liberal majority.

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THERE following some years of editorial service with my first love, the *Star*, Mr. Hugh Graham having made me a proposition too good to be passed up; but in August, 1901, Clifford Sifton, who had acquired the *Free Press*, offered me the editorship, and it only took me the millionth part of a second to accept. My years of wandering and changes were over; my youth had passed, or was passing; for I was in my thirty-fifth year; I had landed the very position that I had often dreamed of occupying, for I had found after my return to Montreal that I had given my heart to the West. When I was talking over with Sifton the possibilities of the paper and the future of the country which it served he said that he thought I had a better job and one which would yield greater satisfaction than even a cabinet position; and though I did not voice my assent I was in thorough agreement with what he said. I have always been interested in politics but not in political honors for myself—the applause of listening senates to command was never one of my ambitions. In fact I was through in 1901 with the goddess Opportunity who had so befriended me. She came around at intervals thereafter with offers—such as an entrance to politics by the front door, or service abroad on behalf of my country—but I was not interested.

I have said that I have had a fortunate life, and the crowning proof is that after some few years of changing experience I found the position and the task to which I could give all my remaining years.

I SHALL have to content myself with these references to the events and experiences of my formative years, and proceed with some general observations. I want in particular to speak of my experiences with my associates who, as proprietors or managers, were more directly interested than I was in the financial results of these enterprises. There is a fairly general idea that while the editor is a noble fellow desirous of serving the public interests, he is blocked in these purposes by the hard-faced men of the counting-room whose one idea is to make money. For over half a century I have held positions which brought me into daily contact with business managers and with proprietors, but I have never encountered the hard-faced, hard-fisted money-grubber. I don't think he exists outside of movieland and the realm of fiction.

I had occasion in the very early years of my career as a journalist to note how valuable could be the service rendered to the community by public-spirited publishers. I have already mentioned how the *Montreal Star* went to some trouble and risk to expose a nest of swindlers who robbed the poor and unwary. The very next year the *Star*, under the direction of its proprietor, Hugh Graham, gave an exhibition of civic courage and public service which I have never forgotten. Returning to Montreal from Ottawa in the early summer of 1885 I speedily realized that a news story of great importance was being suppressed. The city was in the grip of a small-pox epidemic already well advanced. People suffering from the malady could be seen in the streets. But all the powers of the city, business and financial, were determined that nothing should be said about it. It would be bad for the tourist industry, it would keep trade from the city, and so forth and so on. The *Star* was not then the great, rich and powerful paper it afterwards became; it was just getting nicely under way, and defying the great and powerful would be for it a risky business. But Hugh Graham took the bit in his teeth and one day he blew the story in good newspaper style, large headings, alarmist language, and so forth. The indignation of the flouted powers was prodigious; the *Star* was threatened and the threats were not idle ones. But within a week the intelligence and public spirit of the city was mobilized; and during that whole terrible summer Graham, the *Star*,

and the group of citizens that rallied to his leadership were foremost in grappling with the emergency. The most strenuous methods had to be taken. There was compulsory vaccination. There were anti-vaccination riots—one was staged within fifty yards of the house where I roomed, its purpose being to take vengeance on an alderman for his activities in fighting the plague. The city was cut off from the rest of the continent; one could not get into or out of it without being held up and vaccinated, as I learned by personal experience. Before the epidemic was ended some five thousand people died. That was to me a lesson in both the power and the duty of newspapers.

Later when I held for a brief period the position of confidential assistant to Hugh Graham I took part in some of his crusades; and though he was not unaware that his activities were good for his paper, his primary purpose, I believe, was the public good. He continued these public drives for one purpose or another during the whole of his long life. Within a few months of his death—he was then Lord Atholstan—he wrote me that he wanted to see me; and when I answered the call I found he wanted me to line up the newspapers for a drive on the King government to get certain things done, promising me his backing regardless of cost or consequences. The project didn't appeal to me, but the sincerity of purpose shown by this old man, then in his nineties, was to me very moving.

My experiences with the *Free Press*, which from first to last have covered nearly half a century, have confirmed my belief that publishers and owners do not require any instruction in public duty from editors. Though in my first connection with the paper my position was very subordinate, I saw enough of W. F. Luxton, the proprietor, to know him as a public-spirited man and a square shooter. As for Mr. Macklin, with whom I was associated for over thirty years, I shall quote what I said on an occasion like this when we were doing him honor:

"The rule that the patron is always right is by no means of universal application in newspaper work. In fact, editorial policies must in the last analysis control business policies—this being necessary in the long run to the very existence of the paper. Now it has been characteristic of the *Free Press*, as to which I can bear testimony after twenty-eight years as editor, that the proprietorial interests, past and

present, and the executive official who specially represents these interests—Mr. Macklin—have been as fully seized, as I have been myself, of the soundness of this view. During that time many major editorial decisions, after consultation and deliberation, have been taken with regard to what we have felt to be our primary obligation to the public. We are always happy to find our policies popular; but popular or not, there they are, and we stand by them.”

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IN fact, I know nothing that is better for a newspaper in the long run than that it should, when the occasion arises, face unpopularity in the advocacy of causes which it believes to be right. The resulting temporary loss is like the pruning of a vigorous plant in preparation for a greater growth. With this policy, to which Mr. Macklin and I subscribed, Sir Clifford Sifton, the proprietor of the *Free Press*, was in thorough agreement. He was always deeply interested in the *Free Press*—in its plans, its methods, and its policies; but he never forgot his self-denying ordinance by which he left the last word upon policy to those in charge of the paper. The *Free Press*, to his mind, must be the champion of the West's interests and the final judgment as to the nature of that advocacy he left to the parties into whose hands the conduct of the paper had been given.

Striking evidence of this was furnished by the reciprocity campaign of 1911. Within a month of his death he wrote to me suggesting a course to be followed “if,” he wrote, “you can find it in keeping with your conscience to take it.” His sons, who are more directly associated with the management than he was, are in thorough sympathy with the policy we have sought to follow—that the public is entitled to the best that the paper can give them in information and opinion. Having built my life into the *Free Press* I am rightly interested in its future; but upon this point I have no apprehensions since I know it is in safe and strong hands.

I had intended to make some personal references to noted writers and journalists with whom I have had contacts down the decades, but the time will not permit. I shall, however, speak of one who is not usually regarded as belonging to our calling, though he first attracted the attention of the world by his deeds as a war correspondent and for years made his living, like the rest of us, with his pen. I refer to Winston Churchill. I first met him and heard him at the Imperial Press Conference

of 1909 in London. In one of a series of articles about that notable gathering which I wrote for the *Free Press* I dealt with the speakers who addressed us, mostly public men. I noted that their speaking, though admirable in its effectiveness and directness, was not oratorical in manner; it was House of Commons manner for the times, set largely by Arthur J. Balfour. A popular platform performer found it difficult, I said, to get the ear of the house; and I went on to say:

“There are some men who are factors, alike in the forum and the field. One such is Augustine Birrell, who obviously did not learn to speak in the House of Commons, but whose wit and eloquence make him acceptable there. Another is Winston Churchill—that extraordinary young man whose name, spoken in any English gathering, excites either warm championship or unbounded denunciation. Churchill is by way of being the greatest demagogue of modern times; I use the word in its strict etymological—and therefore inoffensive—sense. Lloyd George, too, though I had not the pleasure of hearing him, is, I judge, a speaker who can set a meeting by the ears and at the same time is a master of parliamentary dialectics.”

I want to say deliberately that I think Winston Churchill is the greatest man the race has produced for a thousand years. And to think that for years in England there were leaders who kept Churchill in the dog-house! I may recall that when George Ferguson made his trip to England shortly before the war, he asked the Labor and other members who were opposed to the government why they did not unite behind Churchill. They scouted the idea.

I might also mention that in the third Imperial Press Conference held in Australia in 1925, the representative of the *Yorkshire Post* was a charming young man in his twenties with whose name you will be familiar, but not as a journalist. He was Anthony Eden, and as proof that he was doing his job I have a book which he sent me containing his articles on the Conference as they appeared in the *Post*.

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I MUST say a word as well about Philip D. Ross of the *Ottawa Journal*, who is more entitled than I am to the title which is sometimes given to me—that of Dean of Canadian journalists. He is older than I am by several years, and he has been in active journalistic work for a longer period. We began our journalistic careers with the *Montreal Star*, and I have heard this story about how he got into newspaper work,

which I believe is substantially true. He had a degree in engineering from McGill University, and had a good job with the Montreal Harbor Board when he developed a yearning to be a newspaper man, which is one of the most disturbing and commanding of desires. He went to Hugh Graham and asked to be taken on the *Star* staff. Mr. Graham, who was a friend of the Ross family, sought to discourage him by saying that he could only pay a very small salary. Ross said, "What can you pay?" Mr. Graham answered: "Five dollars a week." "I'll be around Monday morning," said the young engineer. That was the beginning of a newspaper career that is still in being. When I joined the *Star* Ross, who was one of the outstanding athletes of his day, had departed to be sporting editor of the *Toronto Mail*, but he returned to the *Star* later as managing editor, and I had the pleasure of serving under him for a year. When I abandoned the journalistic infant that I had helped to bring into the world at Ottawa, friends of mine on the *Star* staff came to the rescue. I was succeeded as editor by A. H. U. Colquhoun, and a little later Mr. Ross bought the *Journal*, which under his guidance has become a newspaper of the first rank. As for Mr. Colquhoun, after a successful career in journalism in Toronto he gave Ontario distinguished service for more than twenty years as Deputy Minister of Education.

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OF my associates on the *Free Press* I must bear tribute to the life and character of Walter Payne, who was known to many in this audience. During my first round with the *Free Press* he was my chief; and after I came back we spent thirty years together in a most harmonious partnership. Of the men who, during my editorship, came in to serve for long or short periods, many of them beginners, the time would fail me were I to mention them in detail. There was D. B. MacRae, the only man I ever hired "unsight unseen"; the letter I got from him from an Ontario town was irresistible. There was T. B. Robertson, who gave up putting other men's articles into type in order to show them what could really be done with the English language.

Into the engaging of persons who wanted to break into the newspaper game the element of luck entered, as in my own case.

An English immigrant came into my office one day with a letter of introduction to me. He had been a teacher in England but he thought he would like to try journalism in his new home. We were not adding to the staff just then, and I was about to politely dismiss him when he went on to say that in recent years he had been organizer for the Liberals in a certain constituency in Kent, which I knew was a veritable Gibraltar of Conservatism. Well, this turned the tide for him. I said to myself, "This chap has sand"; and I put him to work in the room where we filed our cuts and newspaper clippings.

A week or so later a tall, slim youngster came in and struck me for a job. I liked his looks, and when I found that he was the son of a man whom I had known twenty-five years before I took him in, and he, too, was sent to the file-room, which was, so to speak, our detention place until we decided what to do with its inmates. I immediately discovered that both the immigrant and the lad were gifted in disputation. There were few problems plaguing mankind which did not get a thorough airing in that room in the next few weeks.

The Englishman was the late A. E. Darby. He became a valued editorial writer, but his ambition soon carried him into other fields. The lad, in next to no time, became a star reporter; he went to the wars, but we were fortunate enough to get him back, and he has represented the *Free Press* at the national capital with great distinction. I refer, of course, to Grant Dexter, who is with us to-night.

George Ferguson, with whom I share my burdens, adding a little to his load month by month, I first met in the halls and cloisters of Oxford University. My business in England at that time was to get as near as I could to what was going on in the Imperial Conference of 1923. Of course, I was outside the gates but as I was on fairly good terms with Mackenzie King, George Graham, and Oscar Skelton, I knew not only what I could put into my dispatches but as well those things that never get reported. I was invited to speak to the Raleigh Club, an Oxford institution which had for its purpose "the discussion of the politics of the Commonwealth." I had a very good evening with the club and there was little open disagreement with my heresies as they were then somewhat generally regarded. However, the speaker at the next meeting was Mr. S. M. Bruce,

Prime Minister of Australia, who was perhaps called in to repair any damage I had done. I met many of the Canadian Rhodes scholars, then in attendance at the university: Graham Spry, a former member of our staff who had a card of re-entry had he cared to exercise it; King Gordon; George Glazebrook, now a professor in Toronto University, and George V. Ferguson. Two or three years later Mr. Ferguson walked into my office. He said he had a job on the *Times*, but he would prefer to do newspaper work in Canada. We saw to it that the *Times* did not have him and that we did; and thereby we did Canada and Canadian journalism, and also ourselves, a substantial service.

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I MUST bring this rambling talk to a close, appropriately enough, with references to my old age, which, after all, is the occasion for this very enjoyable and to me rather overwhelming occasion. Disraeli says in *Coningsby* that youth is a blunder; manhood a struggle, and old age a regret. But I have never felt for a moment that decisions I made in my youth as to my life-work and the causes to which I would devote myself were blunders. Struggle befits manhood. Old age, it is true, has its moments of regret for failure to make the most of the years that have fled; but since nothing can be done about it, it is well to be cheerful in the mood of Rabbi ben Ezra:

Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first was
made . . .
All I aspired to be
And was not, comforts me;
I might have been a brute but would
not sink i' the scale.

There has been much written about old age that is noble and inspiring; it was once only literature to me to be enjoyed for its beauty, but in these later years I turn to it for comfort and support. I think of the happy old age that Morley described, with his lamentation that it was missed by Edmund Burke:

"We could only wish that the years had brought to him what it ought to be the fervent prayer of us to find at the close of the long struggle with ourselves and with circumstance—a disposition to happiness, a composed spirit to which time has made things clear, an unreluctant temper and hopes undimmed for mankind."

LAST year George Iles, a friend of mine, as I had been privileged to call him from my first days in Montreal, sent me from New York in keeping with a custom of fifty years' standing, a book picked up in some second-hand bookstore, which he thought might please me. It was called "The Inspiration of Old Age," and the inscription was in a firm and clear hand in no way revealing the fact that the writer was closing his ninetieth year, or foreshadowing the death which came to him six months later. In this volume were all the classics on old age: Cicero's essay; the wisdom of Epictetus and Pliny; Lamb's "Superannuated Man"; the observations of Bacon, of Montaigne and of Addison; and poems by many hands. Included was Landor's poem in which he thanks age "for expelling Fear and Hope, one vile, the other vain." That is however true only for the individual who lives only for himself. We who are old may be armed against Fate, but we cannot but have Hope and Fear for all those who have their future before them.

Landor also wrote a quatrain on his seventy-fifth birthday:

I strove with none, for none was worth
my strife;
Nature I loved, and next to Nature,
Art;
I warmed both hands before the fire of
life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

The first line of that quatrain was untrue, as far as Landor was concerned, and would be equally untrue if applied to me. The rest of the quatrain I can accept for myself, but I prefer when I come to the fourth line to switch from Landor to Tennyson, in *Ulysses*:

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use,
As if to breathe were life . . .

But it is the lines at the end of this poem which most appeal to me, because I can include with myself all my friends in the audience who have passed the age of seventy, and are living, as the saying is, on "borrowed time":

We are not now that strength which in
old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which
we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts
Made weak by time and fate but strong
in will
To strive, to seek, to find and not to
yield.